

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXVIII    January, 1945    No. 1

## The Best of Years Ahead

### Our Year Text for 1945

*"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,- and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." - Matt. 6:3.*

LESSONS OF unspeakable and eternal worth have been learned in past years, not because we were such good pupils but because we had the "Good Teacher." Many under-tutors have cooperated, and the curriculum has been separated into many heads, but there has been one underlying purpose in all the instruction-that five might share His righteousness and His Kingdom. In point of time the righteousness must come first, but as regards value, each is of worth so lofty as to make comparison folly. We enter a new year, under the guidance of this same Teacher, confident that it can be our best. But what are the requirements? How can we best accomplish this? A diligent heeding of our Master's faithful admonition in this text, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness," is necessary if we are to make this the best year of our Christian experience, and we should -make no mistake as to what it means to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

In the Beatitudes Jesus has told us that the Christian's blessedness does not consist in nor depend upon the abundance of earthly things, though in moderation they are as necessary to him as to the Gentile world. In one simple paragraph, the context of our text (ver. 9-32), Jesus covers the entire difficult question as to the Christian's duty regarding these necessities.\*

---

\* See Scripture Studies, Vol. VI, Chapter XI-V, especially pages F572, F573.

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of," therefore avoid the pitfalls of greed and anxiety that lie close at hand-just outside the narrow path. Wealth beyond the dreams of the most avaricious of misers is within the grasp of one who lays up treasure in heaven; but, as Jesus points out in verse nineteen, this prospect is for those who do not lay up treasure on earth. For the Oriental this included raiment, precious stones and metals, which moth and rust might attack. Each can easily test for himself where his treasure is, for "there will his heart be also." Except by the grace of God neither rich nor poor are safe on either score; for the richest can be overanxious, and the poorest greedy of gain.

It is *foolish* to set one's heart on perishable earthly treasure, however desirable it may be for present use. It is *pernicious* to fix one's gaze on earth's trifles, thus darkening the vision of the more distant but eternal things. "How great is that darkness!" It is *fatal* to do so, for "no man can serve two masters." Two things so far removed from each other cannot at the same time hold one's attention. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and there-is no, faith when self instead of God is trusted to decide what things are needful or to provide them. Trusting His grace does not imply slothfulness or negligence. It is ours to sow, relying on God to give the increase. Our common expression, "freedom from care," tells of the slavery of anxiety, and hints at the peace that may reign in the heart whose treasure is all in heaven with our loving Father as its guardian. "Therefore," He says to us, "Be not anxious -for your life, what ye shall eat, or-what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on."

### LESSONS FROM NATURE

The tenderness of the Master's tone as He utters the gentle reproof of this passage is indicated by the illustrations He uses, the delicate wild lily of the Nazarene hillsides and the defenseless fowl of the air. Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," describes the Huleh lily which he (believes to be the one our Lord referred to. "This Huleh lily is very large, and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, as d; king never sat under, even in his utmost glory. And when I met this incomparable flower, in all its loveliness, among the oak woods around the northern base of Tabor and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent His youth, I felt assured that it was this to which He referred.... Nothing can be in higher contrast than the luxuriant, velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it." Could any illustration more aptly have described the "all glorious" Bride amid her present surroundings? -and of the thousands of instances when, unknown to us, the hand that nurtures the wild flowers has protected us from life's thorns? His eye is quick to note the roots of evil, and, while we wonder that He should have permitted us to The placed where we are, knows that a little to this side the thorns would have choked out all growth, but that over there in .that attractive, clear spot we would soon have been the food of some roving animal. If the year ahead should have more of thorns, let us remember that He can regulate their growth as readily as He can clothe the lily, and that therefore "no trial will overtake us greater than we are *able* [in His strength] to bear."

The lily's dangers are the withering south wind and the scythe of the mower. We might use them as pictures of the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches. At first touch of the desolating breath of the south wind, an agreeable warming is felt, but the end comes quickly and the loveliest of lilies is left faded, parched, and dead. The other picture speaks of the futility of sacrificing spiritual hopes to fire the oven that bakes our bread.

The whole passage in which these illustrations are found is a lesson on prayer. Jesus has just instructed His disciples to look to their heavenly Father for even their daily bread, without doubt meaning both the physical and the spiritual. He had just assured them that our Father knows the things we need, so there is no excuse for an anxious brow as we pray this petition, worrying for fear the loaves will be neither large enough nor good enough. He does indicate that "the morrow," representative of the Father's overruling providence, "shall provide for the things of itself." (John J. Owen's Commentary so translates this clause.)

The promise of our Year's Text is-not an encouragement to sloth, for "He that provideth not for his own is worse than an unbeliever." The word "provide," to look into the future, according to its etymology, is a literal translation of the Greek word Paul uses in this text, 1 Tim. 5:8. This means

taking thought for the future, but not anxious thought. The larger responsibility which Weymouth's translation and foot-note place on the Christian seems to be correct: "If a man makes no provision for those dependent on him [literally "his own," including his own slaves. So Cyprian required Christian masters to tend their sick slaves in time of pestilence], and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is behaving worse than an unbeliever. There is no hint of anxious thought here; but of careful estimating as to how much ground must be plowed and properly fertilized that there may be an ample supply of nourishing food for all, careful selecting of seed that the food may be of the best, a judicious estimating as to the proper amount to store for coming needs not tearing down old barns and building new that: our neighbors may envy-and the grinding, the heating and watching of the oven; all these fall to our lot. When the bread, brown and tempting, comes to the table, we give *Him* thanks that *He*, not our effort, has answered the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." How prone, nevertheless, is the flesh rather to think of *its* hours of planning and of the callouses on *its* hands.

"Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

### **PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST**

There are the same primary and secondary meanings in the English word "first," and the Greek word which it represents. With this in mind our Master's instruction is to begin the day with the Kingdom and make it the principal thing throughout the day. If the day starts with the world and the flesh, and they are uppermost throughout the day, the life can but be fleshly. The fact that in our day there are more things to attract our attention, and more things supposedly necessary to life than ever before, is offset by tests that more clearly than ever before reveal our true state. Present conditions make very apparent whether the Kingdom of heaven is being made ours, for it is not only righteousness, but also "peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17.) Righteousness -is as elusive, and there is as much danger today as at any time in the past that we will seek *our* righteousness instead of *His* righteousness and be very content with ourselves, so that that point is as difficult to guard now as when our Lord spoke these words. But 'how do our "peace and joy stand the test of "His day"?

We who have prayed with the spirit and the understanding that the Kingdom might come, find going on all about us a work of destruction, preparatory to its full establishment-a work that we have been telling others about, of tearing down the old that the new may be put in its place. Is peace still garrisoning our hearts now that the day of darkness has engulfed our loved ones? Have we proved that the Kingdom of heaven is not just righteousness, but also peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"? -- not the world's peace born of conceit, nor their short-lived joy, but the peace and joy of which "there shall be no end." That is a Kingdom it will be impossible to keep "shut up in our bones," when once we truly know its peace and joy reigning in our hearts-even though every one of our loved ones is threatened or already reached by the bloody hands of war. We must not forget the promise that our Bridegroom's coming is to be *over* the clouds (see the Greek of Matt. 24:30, 45) that mark His presence, in the sense of being over them. for direction and control. Clouds over our own dwelling can mean no harm, but eternal good, if He is over them.

This lesson tells us that in all our endeavors we should remember our entire dependence upon God that our life is to be one of *cooperation* with God. We must therefore ask His direction before we undertake to decide what we are to do or not to do. Realizing our insufficiency we should ever be in a state of mind that would seek with meekness and simplicity to know our heavenly Father's will. We should have no choice of our own that is at variance with His. The choice should be left with Him. This is the one condition on which we can cooperate with God. There must be a willing submission to divine guidance without the least resistance or bias of mind -- in the attitude of sincere waiting upon God that we may learn not only what He would have us do, but the time and manner of doing it. The language of our hearts must ever be, "My soul, wait thou *only upon* God." This is very important. God is pleased to be present with and cooperate with such a soul.

### HE IN US AND WE IN HIM

It is a partnership where we must realize that not only the capital, but all the personal operative power is from one Source. Man works, it is true; but man's work without God's working as the basis of it is of no avail. Man's strength is in God. Hence there must be no undue anxiety, no excited eagerness, "no methods and plans of action originated and prosecuted on worldly principles; which necessarily imply some distrust of the skill and resources of the great Being who has thus condescended to work by means of human instrumentality. We must move when God moves; stop when He stops; act when He acts. Any assumption on our part of superior wisdom or strength any disposition to move in anticipation of His movement, or in any way to forestall the divine intimations would be getting not only out of the position of dependence and nothingness, but out of line of cooperation. This means meekness and simplicity of heart, entire self-renunciation.

The highest honor and the highest power of man is, having put away all hindrances, to wait upon God in simple faith. Man never acts to higher and nobler purpose than when, in the realization of his own insufficiency, he places himself in full submission and lets God work in him. In this attitude he is as the "lily of the field," which receives the morning dew, the summer shower, and the daily sunshine, appropriates each to itself, and without self-effort becomes beautifully "arrayed" as "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed." This does not mean inactivity or idleness, but, he is like the scholar who is impressed with a sense of his own inferiority and ignorance, and is willing to sit patiently and humbly at the feet of his distinguished teacher that he may grow in knowledge. His mind is receptive, but not inert. He is in the attitude of listening, but not idle. We are to consider every moment as consecrated to God, and moment by moment to cooperate with Him, in all events of whatever character -- thus "seeking first the Kingdom of God." We have consecrated ourselves to God for all time, and each separate duty and experience gives us the opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves. The present moment, therefore, is in a special sense the important moment-the moment which we cannot safely pass without having the divine blessing upon it. How thankful we should be to be permitted thus to enter into partnership with God and to become co-workers with Him. How the thought of our life being united with the life and activity of *God elevates* and *sanctifies* every moment, every experience, every duty!

Let us diligently, first and primarily, seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and it will then be possible to "take joyfully the spoiling of the most loved of our good things; and this, whatever its experiences otherwise, will be a joyful new year. Let us pray for one and all of the Lord's people that we may have that kind of a *Happy New Year!*

- P. E. Thomson.

## Another Year

Another year is dawning!  
Dear Master, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee.  
Another year in leaning,  
Upon Thy loving breast,  
Of ever-deepening trustfulness,  
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness,  
In the shining of Thy face.,  
Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise;  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence "all the days."

Another year of service,  
Of witness of Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier works above.  
Another year is dawning!  
Dear Master, let it be  
On earth, or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee!

- *Frances Ridley Havergal.*

## Love the Principal Thing

*"Now abide faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love." - 1 Cor. 13:13.*

THE VALUE of resolution or decision of character is generally acknowledged. All proper instruction aims to have the youth of our land accept some high ideal, some high standard of character and course in life, and to seek to attain that ideal. Those who are without purpose, aim, ideality in life are the shiftless and unhappy; and the success of each life in respect to its happiness or failure and in respect to the happiness or misery it will bring to others in contact with it, will be in accordance with the character of the ideal accepted.

Moreover, the active, energetic, rushing people who have ideals, and are striving to attain them, frequently with advancing years experience a change of sentiment. Often they find that their ideals have proven unsatisfactory. Indeed, there is no doubt about it that this is the experience of the majority of the wisest people of the world. Hence by common consent the beginning of a New Year is considered a favorable time, not only for the youth of the land to make new resolutions and to start energetically to pursue an ideal, but also for those who have failed of their ideals in the past, through weakness and difficulties, to take a fresh start of resolution and determination. Additionally this is admittedly a favorable time for discarding ideals which have proven unsatisfactory, and for the seeking and acceptance of higher, nobler, better ones. Furthermore, 'it is a favorable time for putting into effect good resolutions. Those who fail to make such resolutions make very little progress in character-building.

What we have been considering is applicable to all mankind, but to the true Christian these things are still more important than to the world, because the aim and the hope set before him in the Scriptures are so much higher and so much more valuable than that recognized by the world in general. And here we must differentiate between the nominal Christian and the true one. The name Christian has become synonymous with civilization in general usage, but not so in Biblical usage; and our standpoint must be that of the Scriptures. The true Christian, then, according to 'the Bible, 'is one who has recognized himself as a sinner by nature, "a child of wrath even as others," and who desires to flee from his sins and imperfections and to attain unto righteousness and eternal life. He has seen in divine providence that our Lord Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, by whom alone he may return to Divine fellowship and 'love and to the gift of God, eternal life. The true Christian is one who has accepted Christ as his Redeemer, and who, while striving for righteousness and in opposition to sin within and without, is not deceived into thinking that he can do perfectly; but realizing the imperfections of his very best endeavors, he relies upon the merit of the great Redemption-sacrifice of Christ to make up for his unwilling blemishes. Because of his faith in the precious blood he is reckoned a member of the "Household of Faith," and is styled one of the "brethren."

But a Christian, in the still higher sense that the Scriptures set forth, is one who goes beyond such faith, such righteous endeavors, and hearkens to the words of the Apostle, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, and your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) This sacrifice 'that the Apostle speaks of is a matter that few even of the Household of Faith understand experimentally. It means much more than to strive against sin. It means a voluntary surrender of the will, and hence of all that we possess, to the service of God and His Message of Grace. It means such a complete revolution that those who take this step are called in the Scriptures "New Creatures in Christ Jesus," "members in particular of the Body of Christ."

Such are the "begotten again" ones, styled by the Apostle a "Royal Priesthood," a "holy nation," a "peculiar people." These enter into covenant relationship with God, by which they surrender all their rights and privileges as men that they may have the higher riches and greater privileges as spirit beings. These greater privileges will be fully entered upon at their resurrection change, but are reckonedly entered into from the time of their covenant. Of such the Apostle says, "Old things have passed away, all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) The worldly aims and ambitions which once they held as their ideals have been exchanged for new ideals, Heavenly hopes, Heavenly ambitions. If once they looked upon Caesar, Napoleon or Alexander the Great, as their ideals for courage, or if once they regarded Socrates or Plato or Confucius or Shakespeare as their literary ideals, or if they looked upon a Carnegie, a Rothschild, a Rockefeller or Croesus as their financial ideals, these things have changed. They have new standards, new ideals, and new representatives of these. Not that they have lost an appreciation of wealth or honor or power or literature, but that they have gained a new standpoint of appreciation.

### **THINGS ONCE LOVED NOW DESPISED**

So lofty are the new ideals of these "new creatures in Christ Jesus" that their former standards are greatly depreciated. When they now think of greatness, of victories and of power, they think not of Caesar, but of Jesus -- His greater victory and high exaltation to the power, glory, honor and immortality -- of the Heavenly Kingdom, which soon is to establish itself and rule over the world of mankind-not for selfish objects, but to the intent that all the families of the earth maybe blessed. Taking this higher ideal, and hearing the promises of the Lord through the Scriptures, these new creatures now aspire to be "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord." (Rom. 8:17.) And they have the assurance of attaining a share in His glory, honor and immortality if they are but faithful-even unto death. (Rev. 2:10.) Instead of losing their appreciation of riches they get the higher appreciation, hearing the Word of the Lord, "All things are yours ... for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:21-23.) They aspire then in harmony with the divine invitation, not only to the possession of all power but to *all* riches-not *for* selfish uses, but -that they may lavish divine favors and blessings during the Millennial Age upon the whole world of mankind, which then will enter the blessed epoch of Restitution-"Times of Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began." - Acts 3:19-21.

Nor does their love for knowledge abate one whit, but rather increases, though it takes a different turn and relies for guidance upon divine revelation rather than upon human guesswork, speculation and philosophy. Content to admit ignorance of many things, these have an assurance that by and by they shall know even as they are known-perfectly; and that in the present time, by following the counsels of the divine Word, they are really wise toward God, however foolish they may appear to the worldly wise. They are content to believe that the outcome will show that God is true, and will prove *many* so-called wise men to have been in error in many of their guesses respecting Truth. - Rom. 3:3, 4.

Still confining ourselves to the true Christian class addressed in the Scriptures, we find that because of difference of mental structure and varying experiences, some are inclined to put one feature of living grace in advance of another, so that there is some perplexity and difference of opinion. One tells us that his highest conception of a consecrated life is represented by activity in the service of others in preaching or mission work. Others tell us that their highest conception of privilege as new creatures is in providing things honest and in doing benevolent works, helping the poor with an open hand. Others tell us that their highest conception of the duty of the new creature is the study of the Word of God, that they may understand the Divine Plan and teach it to others. As a matter of fact, all of these are good purposes, and under certain circumstances proper

enough; but none of these recognize what the Scriptures point out to be the very highest of Christian ideality.

### **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

Considering our text in connection with its context, we perceive that the Apostle has been discussing the miraculous gifts enjoyed by the early Church -- granted to them of the Lord with, *a* view to their instruction and establishment. The Apostle discusses the various gifts that were then granted to believers. One would rise in meeting possessed of *power* to speak in an unknown tongue; *which* he had never studied. Another was gifted with ability to interpret or translate the message of the unknown tongue into the vernacular of the congregation. The message thus came through two persons; and the company of the Lord's people, not then having the Bibles and helps which we now possess and enjoy and use profitably, were drawn together by these operations of the Lord's Holy Spirit for their instruction. Others had gifts of healing or of knowledge or of oratory.

The Apostle found the brethren of that time inclined to think of these gifts of the Spirit too highly, attaching too much importance to them. Some of them seemed to take pride especially in the gift of tongues. The Apostle assured them that he spoke in more tongues than any of them that he had more of the various, gifts than -any of them; but that he did not esteem these his highest treasures nor the most noble marks of his being the -servant of the King of kings. He says in substance, It is proper enough for you to esteem these gifts and to seek to use them and to desire the most useful of them. He tells them that the gift of prophecy or public speaking would be the most useful of all gifts, because its opportunity for influencing others would be the greatest. Hence he advised them that amongst the gifts they would choose this rather than the unknown tongue. Pointing, out that all the gifts of God are good, he declares that God has set some in the Church, first Apostles; secondarily prophets, orators; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversity of tongues. He thus ranks. the gift of tongues, which they thought so much of, as the very last of all the gifts, and says, "Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet I show unto you *a* more excellent way" -- something better than any of these gifts.

### **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT SUPERIOR TO GIFTS**

The fruits of the Spirit are those developments which come to us as new creatures in Christ, gradually growing daily, yearly. The fruits of the Spirit are manifest, namely, Faith, Hope, Meekness, Patience, Gentleness, Long-Suffering, Brotherly-Kindness, Love. These are gifts in one sense of the word, but fruits in another. As the fruit of the tree is the gift to its owner and caretaker, so is the fruitage of the new nature. These fruits of the Spirit represent *a* development of character under divine guidance and by divine assistance, and are therefore far superior to those miraculous gifts of the early Church which indicated no special character development but were merely to be witnesses and encouragements.

Seeking to discourage a too great appreciation of the gifts in the early Church, and to encourage **are** appreciation of the higher things, the Apostle contrasts the two, saying that the gifts would pass away but that the developed fruits would remain, prophecies would cease, the gift of tongues would cease, knowledge would vanish away as greater knowledge would come, but faith and hope and love, these three would abide, would continue. And it has been so; miraculous gifts imparted through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles necessarily ceased when the last of the Apostles had died and when those died who had received these special gifts through them. But all down through the Gospel Age, for centuries, faith has persisted, hope has persisted, love

has persisted, and these three we still have; and whoever has these three -- with what they include -- is rich in grace beyond all comparison with those who had the gifts of the Spirit at the beginning of this Gospel Age.

### **FAITH, HOPE, LOVE**

We yield to no one in our appreciation of the value of faith—a correct faith, faith in God, faith, in the precious blood, faith in the Bible as the Word of God, faith in the exceeding great and precious promises. We realize that without such a faith we could never be conquerors, overcomers, but, would succumb either to the wiles of the Adversary or to the spirit of the world or to the weakness of our own flesh. The proper faith is an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering in within the veil and holding us serene in all the storms and difficulties of the journey to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Hope also is a necessary element of Christian character; it is built upon our faith. Without faith we cannot have hope. Hope is faith in activity; it is the anchor—within the veil. Faith is the cable by which we are firmly to it. Who does not see the importance of holding fast, being well anchored in the hopes and promises given us by our Lord directly and through the Apostles and Prophets. Ah! we must hold both to our faith and hope -- nothing can persuade us: that these are unimportant, trivial. As the Apostle declares, these have abode throughout the Age.

But when he speaks of love the Apostle declares that it is the greatest of all. Why? we ask. Indeed many would be inclined to suppose that love would be much less important than any other quality. They speak of rugged, rude faith and hope and of rugged characters whose lives represent little of love. Where shall we set our standards, our ideals as new creatures? What shall we strive for most particularly? The Apostle's declaration is that love is the greatest of these great qualities; but his advice is very contrary to the sentiment of the world. It tells us that if we have love we cannot be successful, that the quality would interfere with us whatever our ideals might be. From the world's standpoint love would hinder a politician from crushing down others that he might rise to prominence himself; love would hinder the merchant from crushing his competitors that he might amass the larger fortune. Large love for others they tell us, would lead us to esteem others better than ourselves, and mean that we would be hindered in the great race that is going on amongst men for riches and honor and power. Shall we heed to the world's advice or shall we follow the divinely inspired testimony of the Apostle?

The two standpoints are totally different. The new creatures cannot follow the advice of the world; to do so would be to renounce and deny all the new ideals we have accepted, and toward which we have been laboring. If as new creatures we would gain the great prize of our calling in Christ Jesus, we must hearken to Him that speaketh from Heaven; we must hearken to the words of the Lord through the Apostles and Prophets; we must note our Master's testimony, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another"; "Herein shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one for another." (John 13:34, 35.) His further message through the Apostle is, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," and again, in our text, "Love is the principal thing," the greatest thing in the world.

The new creature must attain this character of love; for all of his hopes depend upon his attaining this character-likeness of his Lord. Otherwise he will not be fit for the Kingdom or be granted a place in the elect Little Flock, which is to inherit it and to be used of the Lord during the Millennium for the blessing and uplifting of the world in general out of sin, degradation and death. Love is the principal thing, then; for whatever knowledge we might gain, whatever talents we might possess, whatever faith, whatever hope, none of these could bring us to the Kingdom.

They can all merely assist us in developing this love-character which is the Kingdom test-the fulfilling of the Law. Nor do we mean that the perfection of love-character can be manifest in our fallen flesh. Its weakness, its kinks, its peculiarities are hindrances so that the Apostle declares, "We cannot do the things that we would." (Gal. 5:17.) But our hearts must be up to this love standard; we must will lovingly. In our hearts we must love the Lord supremely, we must love the brethren, we must love -our neighbors, we must love our enemies; and if we so do, the effect will be that so much as lieth in us this love will be manifested to others in our words, in our looks, in our tones, in our actions. Whatever imperfection there is in the matter must not be of the heart but merely of the flesh, and such imperfection because of heredity is -counted a part of what our Lord redeemed us from and the merit of His sacrifice is counted as covering all those unwilling blemishes so that the love of our hearts carried out in our lives to the extent of our ability is counted of the Lord as perfect love-perfection of character. Such are counted copies of God's dear Son, who was in turn a copy of the Father, an image of God-"the express image of His glorious person." - Heb. 1:3.

### WHAT IS LOVE?

We answer that love is perfection of character "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God" - is fully in accord with God, and hence in the condition pleasing to the Father, the condition the Father is pleased to recognize and bless with eternal life. According to His covenant with those who have become the followers of Jesus, He is pledged to give them upon demonstration of this character, glory, honor and immortality in association with their Redeemer. - Matt. 5:48.

Let us take the analysis of love that is given by the Apostle. One of its elements is meekness. There is a difference between meekness and weakness; Moses was a meek man but a very strong character. He was humble-minded, not boastful, not proud or haughty. So with the new creatures who have this quality of meekness, from the divine standpoint. Gentleness is another element of love. It does not signify weakness or fear. The Christian man is, therefore, the true gentleman, the Christian woman the true gentlewoman -- the highest ideals of these. The world may feign a gentleness which it -does not really possess, but the gentleness of the Christian is a part of his character of love. It is because he thinks lovingly, considerately, of others that he is gentle towards all, seeking to walk with soft tread that he may not disturb others, to touch not rudely, but gently that he may avoid the giving of pain to others, to speak not rudely or harshly, but kindly and gently that he may not wound others.

Patience is another element of love and a part of the true Christian -character. True, we often see great patience in merchants, clerks, etc., exercised merely for policy's saker for fear a good customer might be offended and dollars be missed. But the Christian's patience is of an unselfish kind; for it is a part of love, a part of his disposition. In proportion as he has sympathy and kindness, love, he is disposed to wait, to assist with patience those who at first fail to come up to his ideals. He remembers his own trials and difficulties along these lines; and his broad, sympathetic love enables him to exercise much patience with those who are out of the way and who have not yet seen and have not yet learned to overcome difficulties and hindrances.

Brotherly kindness is another element of love. It is the kindness that ought always to prevail amongst true brethren, but in the Christian this kindness so appropriate to a brother is to be such a heart condition that it will be applied to all men. In this he is copying the Lord, who is kind to the unthankful, the ungrateful. All these qualities the Apostle sums up in the one word, Love, because love, includes every kind of gentleness and kindness imaginable--and love must be the basis of such conduct in order that it may have value in God's sight.

## **"WITHOUT LOVE I AM NOTHING"**

Emphasizing the importance of love in the forepart of the chapter front which our text is taken, the Apostle declares that if 'he could speak all the languages known amongst men and the angelic tongue as well, and if he used these talents in preaching, if his preaching were not inspired by love, it would be nothing -- God would esteem it no more, than the sound proceeding from cymbals or any brass instrument. God has not glory, honor and immortality for brass horns and brass cymbals; and if a man should preach the whole Truth in all its grandeur, yet without the spirit of love he would be, nevertheless, as unfit for divine favor and a share in the Kingdom as the brass horn would be. No place in the Kingdom would be found for such. What a lesson for us all as we attempt to sound forth the praises of Him who bath called us from darkness to light! How necessary it is that we shall speak the Truth in the love of it, with hearts full of devotion and appreciation!

Taking another illustration, the Apostle suggests that if he had mountain-moving faith, if his knowledge of divine mysteries and all other mysteries were very great, superior to those of all other men, and even if in his zeal for man or for God he should become a martyr and permit his body to be burned, yet, notwithstanding all this, if the primary influence in these matters were not love, all the sacrifice, all the self-denials, all the labors, even the burning, would profit nothing. Ah, dear friends, when we come to get 'the divine standpoint of things we find indeed that it is very high; and yet our judgment assures us that it is right, that it is just, that it is proper, that God should thus set the standard of love as the only standard by which we shall ultimately be measured. But whoever thinks to have this perfect love for God and for man and make no manifestations of it is equally mistaken. Wherever love is in the heart words, works, thoughts and looks will testify to it, so that he who loves much will serve much. If we love the Lord we shall delight in, His service regardless of failures, regardless of fame, regardless of any earthly consideration; yea, even though the service of the Lord should cause us the loss of human approbation, fellowship, etc. The language of love is well expressed in our dear Redeemer's words, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; Thy Law is written in My heart." (Psa. 40:8.) Hence every true Christian may link the two words love and service, and be sure that his love will manifest itself in zeal. Similarly, love of the brethren will mean a desire to serve the brethren; love of the home and family will mean a desire to do good to them; love of our neighbor will signify a desire to do for his interests according to our knowledge and limitations.

## **THE RESTRAINTS OF LOVE**

The Apostle points out some of the restraints of love. It cannot be quick, irascible; for "Love suffereth long and is kind." He who is loving cannot be envious of others, nor covetous of the blessings and favors they are enjoying; for "Love envieth not. He who is loving cannot be boastful and proud; for "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." He who is controlled by the spirit of love will not be ungracious, unkind, rude; for "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." He who is full of the spirit of love will not be selfish, grasping, neglectful of the interests of others; for "Love seeketh not her own" merely. The truly loving one will not be quickly angered; will not be easily offended; for "Love is not easily provoked." The one controlled by the spirit of love will not be imagining unkindness and rudeness nor seeking to interpret the words or conduct of others unkindly; for "Love thinketh no evil."

He who has the spirit of love will have no satisfaction in the adversities coming upon those who are even his enemies; for "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." He who has the spirit of love regulating his heart, his words, his thoughts, his actions, the Apostle declares

will be ready to "bear all things" and ready to believe everything that is favorable and all that is possible of good, and will be disposed to hope always for the best outcome in respect to all with whom he may have to do. He will be ready also to "endure all things," to submit to many unkindnesses and to credit these largely to weakness or poor judgment or fallen nature.

### **"LOVE NEVER FAILETH"**

Faith will fail in the sense of ceasing when the present time of limitations of knowledge has passed; for then, instead of faith, we shall have sight. Hope will then also reach a glorious consummation; for instead of the hope for the things God has promised us we shall then have them. But "love never faileth," will never cease. Whoever then attains this glorious character of love has a thing of beauty and a joy forever. It will beautify his own character, make him lovely in the sight of his Lord and be the quality that will bring him the Master's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Thou hast faithfully developed My spirit of love in the little things of life. I can therefore now give you greater things to do in My service in glory, in the blessing of others. This character of love, essential to Divine favor, will be essential to the eternal life and eternal happiness of the individual. For God to give eternal life to any others than those who have the perfection of this His own character would be to permit an element in Heaven which sooner or later would be in danger of working mischief and bringing in works of selfishness, sin and injury.

This love standard of character, which is now being developed in the saints in the few short years of the present trial time, must be developed also in the world of mankind in all who will ever attain to eternal life during the Millennial Age.. One difference is that they will have a thousand years for the development of such character while we of the present time have a much shorter period in which to make our calling and election sure by such character development. But then, if our trial is briefer and therefore more rigorous, it also has attached to it the still greater reward of a share in the Divine nature -- glory, honor, immortality. Let us, then, dear friends, resolve for this year that we will strive for the principal thing; that the love of God may more and more be shed abroad in our hearts and that we may come more and more into heart-likeness to Him and so far as possible exemplify this character in our outward words, deeds and looks. Thus we shall attain the highest ideals, God's ideal, and the greatest blessing -- God's blessing.

Finish, Lord, Thy New Creation;  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Show us all Thy great salvation  
Thine shall all the glory be.  
Changed from glory into glory;  
Till we see Thine own dear face;  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

- *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, pages SM272-SM285.

## Divine Faith and Human Reason

*"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." - Heb. 11:1.*

*"In this awful and stupendous manner, at which Reason stands aghast, and Faith herself is half confounded, was the grace of God to man at length manifested" -- Richard Hurd.*

A STUDY OF the movement of faith and free, unbridled human thought picture the alternate action of travail in childbirth. Both the pain and the reaction from pain are progressive. They seem to represent the forward and backward action of two opposite movements like the swing of a pendulum in marking the progress of time; like the inhaling and exhaling of breath in the progress of life, or the advance and retreat of ocean tides. So uniform is this action that it indicates a natural law under divine supervision.

The triumph of the early Christian Church over Paganism was phenomenal. Then followed the rise of free thought based on human conceit, which marked the "Dark Ages of the Gospel period. This was followed by a return to primitive faith that characterized the Reformation. This in turn was submerged by a wave of infidelity which engulfed Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the works of Pascal, Butler, Grotius, Lardner and others were most popular. A great revival of spiritual life followed this and swept over the English speaking world of both hemispheres with increasing force. The latter part of the eighteenth century marked the founding of great Bible Societies, various Missionary Movements and individual moral and spiritual enlightenment. Then came the reactionary movement of the nineteenth century in favor of science, so called, of unlimited Evolution," of Higher (?) Criticism. Many openly embraced Materialism, Pantheism, Agnosticism, Atheism, Naturalism, and Spiritism, all contradicting, and castigating the theories and principles advanced by the others. Surely, the terra firma (so called) sciences of human origin are all crumbling beneath our feet.

In God's dealing with His creatures, He respects the power He has given, man ;to do his own thinking. "God never demands of man a -course of action out of harmony with his reason, at the sacrifice of his judgment, and in opposition to his will; but in every case He satisfies reason, appeals to the judgment, and leaves the decision subject to a free will, enlightened by an understanding of the inevitable final results in. either case. He sets before us inducements or rewards to righteousness, and punishments for unrighteousness, but He does not compel either course. With dig. nity and patience He awaits a sufficient time for our enlightened decision, and then carries out His own purpose with reference to us, in the event of that decision.

"In accordance with this principle, is the invitation of the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 55:1) -- 'Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters' (truth) Water is unwelcome except to the thirsty, and food produces loathing if forced upon one who is not hungry; so truth is obnoxious to those who prefer error. Therefore, God only gives His good things where they are desired, and never compels acceptance of His favors. But blessed is the man that hungereth and thirsteth, for his soul shall be satisfied through the divine bounty." - R650.

Thus it is that those who are filled with human pessimism and materialism have cast their dark cloud over human consciousness in proclaiming the gospel of despair. In their selfish conceit they have hindered those who are honestly seeking for the refreshing waters of truth. These hungry ones have asked for bread and have been given a stone. Human intelligence is finding this highly unsatisfactory. It is costly. It is resulting in the destruction of civil order, of common morality,

and of spiritual integrity. We must now awaken, like the sleepy virgins, to more faith if we are to realize our hope of a spiritual birth. We must prove our faith by the works of faith.

"Note the case of Abraham, the 'father of the faithful.' It is written that he believed God, and that his faith was counted to him for righteousness. But how much faith is required and to what extent is it involved in works? St. James points out that God placed a crucial test upon Abraham's faith, which would have proven it inefficient, if it had not developed to the quickening stage of works of obedience. It was years after the promise had been made, and Isaac, the seed of promise, was grown to young manhood, when God commanded that he should be sacrificed upon the altar-thus prefiguring how The Christ, the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), must all have the testing of faith to the point of obedience, even unto death-sacrificial death.

"Then, fearful that he had given an example of so lofty a faith and obedience as would discourage us, St. James picks out and holds up before us another illustration of faith and works-that of Rahab the harlot. She had faith in God, but it would not have availed her if it had not developed to the degree of activity and helpful service, risking her own interests temporarily for the assistance of the spies. Manifestly she would never have had such works without faith, -and it is the faith that is specially pleasing to the Lord. But the faith would not have been pleasing to the Lord, had it not led up to works in accord. Thus we see how works have to do with our justification, in conjunction with our faith, which is the foundation of our works." - R3478.

At present the world is going through the "Valley of the shadow of death" (Psa. 23), not only in the field of physical conflict, but religious leaders have also thrown us into confusion. Our spiritual leaders seem to be blind. Their minds seem to be clouded with erroneous, preconceived ideas. They cannot see the dark valley opening out and a beautiful horizon and a perfect day coming to dawn before them.

We are at a low in human history, but it is time the sleeping virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) should hear the cry: "Behold the Bridegroom. They must replenish their lamps of faith with the works of faith in the promises of God. We must progress, but let us walk by faith in the promises of our God and not by our own material sight. (2 Cor. 5:7.) It is, thus and only thus human thought can be awakened to a realization of divine faith and the blessed reward it brings. The travail is nearly over and the birth of a new world is due. The pendulum of time will swing again.

- C. G. Reynolds.

## The Main Use of the Christian Armor

*"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." - Eph. 6:13.*

What a strange conclusion to so martial a war-cry! The soldier is generally told to put on his armor for the sake of the battle; here it is for the sake of the camp. To the common view the arduous thing in a Christian's life is the hour of conflict; to Paul it is the hour after conflict. If you or I had written this 'verse we should have put it thus: "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand awaiting the foe, and finally to withstand when the foe has come." But *Paul* reverses the process. To him the withstanding is the less difficult of the two. The, greatest danger he sees for the Christian soldier is just at the point where he has "done all." And is not Paul right in his perception! Is not the arduous bit of a Christian's life rather the camp than the field! When a man feels he is surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, it is comparatively easy to lay aside every weight. But when there is no outward battle, no visible foe, no possible wreath for the victor, when the field is his own heart and the enemy his own wish and the spectator his own conscience, when there is no human voice to cry "Well done!" and no public opinion to say "He has fought a good fight!" - that is the time when he needs the Christian armor.

Lord, arm me for the silence! Often in my hour of trial I am brave when duty has to be done and weak when it is over. In the first fire of my bereavement I have to rise up from before my dead. There are letters to be written; there are sad offices to be performed; there are friends to be bidden to the funeral. And I go through them calmly; I feel as if something supported me; men say, "How bravely he bears it!" But when the letters are finished, and the funeral over, and the friends gone, then comes the misery, the despair. Save me, O Lord! save me from my own companionship! Protect me from the solitude of my heart; arm me against myself! I have been strong in the hour of outward battle because I heard the voices of human sympathy; let me hear the voice of a greater sympathy for the watch of, the night! I was able to withstand in the day because there was work to be done; help me in the shadows when no, man can work! Teach me that the heart has a duty greater than the hand! Teach me that I am, not a perfect soldier when I can only fight! Teach me that the courage which' can endure is nobler than they courage which can strike! Teach me the heroism of Gethsemane ! Thou hast girded me with the sword for the tumult; clothe me with the breastplate for the silence! My armor shall be complete only when I have done all and still shall stand.

- **George Matheson**

## The Red Sea

When the Children of Israel crossed the sea,  
It comforts my heart to know  
That there must have been timorous ones  
Who faltered and feared to go;

Feared the ribbon of road which stretched  
Ahead like a narrow track,  
With the waves piled high on either side,  
And nothing to hold them back

Nothing to hold them back but a Hand  
They could neither see nor feel;  
Their God seemed distant and far away,  
And only the peril real.

Yet the fearful ones were as safe as the brave,  
For the mercy of God is *wide*.  
Craven, and fearless, He led them all  
Dry shod to the other side.

And I think of the needless terror and pain  
We bring, to our own Red Sea.  
Strengthen Thy timorous ones, dear Lord,  
And help us to trust in Thee!

- *Martha Snell Nicholson.*

## **"The Desire of All Nations Shall Come"**

*"Thy Kingdom come." -- Matt. 6:10.*

SOME OF our readers may recall that a few years ago we published a little tract captioned "The World of Tomorrow." This tract had been suggested by the remarkable exhibit which was displayed at the New York World's Fair in 1939-1940.

Those of us who were privileged to visit that Fair well remember seeing embodied in structural picturization "The World of Tomorrow" as this striking exhibit was called. We beheld the anticipated advancement of human achievement in multifarious forms. Our minds, after first being satiated with the sight of man's present accomplishments, were directed to the future, and by the aid of the thrilling spectacle which art and science and \$150,000,000 had combined to produce, we endeavored to visualize an age that shall far transcend the present one. As our powers of imagination were brought into play we were led to wonder if there is to be any limit to the progress and development which encompassed us on every hand.

But then the question arose: What of man himself? Will his ethical progress keep step with discovery and invention? Will he have the same social, political, and economic problems that he has today? And will they seem as impossible of solution then as now? Will unemployment continue to be a menace to human happiness? Will crime increase, or will it be stamped out? Are wars to cease, or is permanent peacenever to be established? Will disease disappear, will death itself be abolished, or is the joy of living always to be marred by pain and disaster, sin and sorrow, ruined prospects, shattered hopes -- the grave forever triumphant? Such questions as these cannot but present themselves to every thinking mind.

### **The Age of Tomorrow**

In seeking satisfactory solutions to these admittedly baffling questions, it has been well observed that we shall be greatly assisted in our search if we note first of all that the "World of Tomorrow" will be the "Age of Tomorrow." Since the Scriptures declare that "the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4), we look for no dissolution of this planet. Three "worlds" or "ages" are mentioned in the Bible, each in connection with this self-same earth, which continues throughout all three. Each of these three "worlds" or "ages" is referred to as a separate "heavens and earth." (2 Pet. 3:4-14.) Here the word "heavens" symbolizes the higher or spiritual controlling powers, and "earth" symbolizes human government and social arrangements. It is sufficient to note here that the second of these "worlds" or "ages" or "heavens and earth," namely, the one in which we live today; 'this' present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), is about to pass away. (2 Pet. 3:7.) It is to be destroyed, not with literal fire, but with the symbolic fire of judgment. (Zeph. 1:18.) The present order or arrangement of government and society, not that of the physical sky and earth, will pass away. The present "heavens" must give place to the "new heavens" -- Christ's spiritual control. The present "earth" (human society as now organized) must (symbolically) melt and be dissolved. It will be succeeded by "a new earth," that is, society reorganized in harmony with earth's new Prince -- Christ. Righteousness, peace, and love will rule, among men when present arrangements have given place to the" new and better Kingdom, the basis, of which will be the strictest justice.

In harmony with this symbolic use of the words "world" and "fire" many will recall the graphic description of affairs by Woodrow Wilson just before the United States entered the World War.

"The whole world's on fire," said he, "and happy shall we be if a spark does not set us on fire also."

## **Armageddon**

Before Woodrow Wilson came into office another president, Theodore Roosevelt, had used a word which today is well known, but which, when he uttered it, sounded strange and unfamiliar to the reporters -- a word which sent them searching not their dictionaries only, but their Bibles. It was the word "Armageddon."

Armageddon was the name given to the plain of Esdraelon, the scene of many battles recorded in the Old Testament; and hence the prophetic scene of the great battle between truth and error, right and wrong, love and hatred, with which this present "world" or "age" is to close. (Rev. 16:16.) The Battle of Armageddon, which even in Theodore Roosevelt's time seemed imminent, and to which the World War undoubtedly led, is fast approaching -- if indeed it is not already waging. Wise men of the world recognize this. For years they have seen the elements of this social conflagration in preparation. Selfishness, increase of knowledge, concentration of wealth, wrong ambition, fear and despair are the ingredients whose friction has set the angry, passions of the world aflame, causing its various social "elements" to melt in the "fervent heat." (2 Pet. 3:10.) Notwithstanding the multiplication of temporal blessings, the satisfied contentment which was measurably enjoyed' by all a century ago, is rarely to be found today. All are dissatisfied. As another has well observed

"All are selfishly and increasingly grasping for 'rights' or bemoaning 'wrongs.' True, there are wrongs, grievous wrongs, which should be righted, and rights that should be enjoyed and respected; Nit the tendency' of our time, with its increase of knowledge and independence, is to look only at the side of questions closest to self-interest, and to fail to appreciate the opposite side. The effect foretold by the Prophets will be ultimately to set every man's hand against his neighbor, which will be the immediate cause of the great final catastrophe. God's Word and providence and the lessons of the past are forgotten under the strong convictions of personal rights, etc., which hinder people of every class from choosing the wiser, moderate course, which they cannot even see because selfishness blinds them to everything out of accord with their own prejudices. Each class fails to consider with impartiality the welfare and rights of others. The golden rule is generally ignored; and the lack of wisdom as well as the injustice of this course will soon be made manifest to **all classes** (rich and poor, male and female, educated and ignorant), for all classes will suffer terribly in this trouble.

This outlook, which statesmen are at their wits end to avert, would occasion us only sorrow and anguish were it not for the assurance of the Scriptures that the results shall work good to the people, overthrowing the reign of selfishness, and establishing, through Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom, the, reign of righteousness. Yes, after the destructive forces of this titanic struggle shall have spent themselves, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4), and the white banner of peace shall float over all the lands of earth. Mankind will have learned the titter futility of seeking to live apart from God, and in their extremity will call upon Him to save them. When in such contrition. and humility of heart they do turn to Him -- they will find Him waiting to be gracious. He will put His wondrous laws of truth and justice, of righteousness and love, in their minds; He will write them, not again on hard tables of stone, but in the softened tablets of their hearts; He will be to them their God, and they shall be to Him His people. No more will it be necessary for a few enlightened ones to instruct the others in regard to the gracious character and purposes of God, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. - Heb. 8:10, 11.

## **The "Lost Horizon" to be Found**

In time, man's social and economic problems will all be solved. The only aristocracy recognized will be that of character, and each will be assisted to develop into the character-likeness of the Master. The "Lost Horizon," as envisioned in the book of that title, and as portrayed in the motion picture based thereon, will have been found. The spirit of brotherly-kindness, which in that artistic work was shown to be so conducive to longevity, peace, and unfailing youth, will displace all opposing influences, and prove to be more effective than the author dreamed. In the genial atmosphere then prevailing, crime, bribery, corruption -- selfishness in all its many forms -- will be unknown; for they could no more live amidst the conditions which will then, obtain than ice could live in a burning sun, or darkness coexist with noon.

## **No more Disease-Death itself Abolished**

In regard to health, the future Age is radiant with promise. But disease and pain being the natural concomitant of death, we must go back to the beginning of earth's troubles if we would fully comprehend what is involved in their elimination. Our first parent, because of willful transgression of God's law, was cut off from the source of life. In Eden was the Tree of Life, to which, but for his disobedience, he would have had continual access, and lived forever. (Gen. 2:16; 3:22-24.) Expelled, with his life, from this perfect home, he was compelled to live in the unfinished earth, and so the sentence his Creator had passed upon him, "Dying thou shalt die," went gradually into effect. (Gen. 2:17, margin.) Within the thousand-year day in which he 'ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil," Adam died -- nine hundred and thirty years old.

It would have been entirely just of God to have inflicted the death penalty suddenly, as by a lightning stroke or some other speedy method, instead of permitting it to take effect gradually, as He did, by the exhaustion of Adam's vitality through conflict with the unfavorable conditions (of climate, sterility of soil, storms, thorns, weeds, etc.) of the unprepared earth. And this, indeed, He doubtless would have done, and none of Adam's race would have been permitted to come into existence at all had He not had it in His heart to grant Adam (and the unborn race in him) a further opportunity, under still more favorable conditions, of choosing righteousness and life. Because of this gracious purpose, He saw that by allowing the death penalty to take gradual effect, Adam would receive a valuable lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its baneful results; such a lesson, indeed, as would never need to be repeated. There is a depth of meaning in the Creator's words as He sent forth His fairly tried and justly condemned creatures amongst thorns and briars; to labor, and pain, and sorrow, and disease; and to subjection to the casualties and calamities of nature's unfinished work. He said, "Cursed is the ground for thy **sake**" (Gen. 3:17-19); that is, the earth in general is in its present imperfect condition for your profit and experience; even though you may not esteem it so.

The children of the condemned pair inherited their fall, imperfections, and weaknesses, and shared likewise in the death sentence imposed upon them, and as convict laborers, so to speak, have not only been learning what sin is, and its undesirable results, but by their labor and skill have for six thousand years been preparing the earth and bringing it as a whole to the full perfection designed -- illustrated in the specially prepared Garden of Eden -- getting it ready, although they little realize it, for their everlasting habitation, if, when the offer is presented to them under the favorable conditions of Messiah's Kingdom, they shall choose righteousness and life.

Nor will this offer be made to those only who have not actually entered the tomb. No! In order to give Adam and all his family this favorable opportunity above described, there is to be an awakening of all the dead, as we read: "There shall be a resurrection of the, dead, both of the just and unjust"; in harmony also with the Master's words, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice [the voice of the Son of God], and shall come forth," (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29.) We thank God for the wideness of His mercy, "like the wideness of the sea"-that God is no respecter of persons, that every member of the race, condemned through Adam's disobedience, redeemed from that condemnation by the death of Jesus, shall have a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of the truth and of using that knowledge for his own recovery from sin, sickness, sorrow, pain, and death -- the ultimate attainment of human perfection and everlasting life in Paradise -- the restored earth. - 1 Tim. 2:4; Acts 3:21.

Many earnest men and women who give evidence of exercising faith in Christ as their Savior, have difficulty in joining us in these, our hopes for the world. The destiny of the Church of the Gospel Age, in which they think they have their part, figures so largely in their anticipations, that they seem almost to forget that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the *world*, and to lose sight of the blessed prospect that, not only is the present Church to be saved out of the ruined world, to become the Eve of the Second Adam, but that the ruined earth itself is yet to be renewed, and to become the happy home of saved nations, who participate in the results of redemption.

Writing as far back as 1886 on this important result of the ransom sacrifice of Christ an able writer has observed:

"The narrowness which sees nothing but the salvation of the Church of this dispensation is born of hit man selfishness, and not of Divine Love; it is founded not on the teaching of Scripture but on tradition and prejudice. The Bible plainly teaches that while the peculiar glories of the Church are hers, and hers alone; that while the special privileges of the natural seed of Abraham belong to Israel, and to Israel only: that there is yet a blessed future awaiting mankind also under the gracious government of Immanuel-, that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal Kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the Tempter, and so established in righteousness, that the Holy One can take up His abode among them forever. 'He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

"The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment of a Kingdom of God, in which His will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation, for which we daily pray, is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw, and without an interruption, is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the new Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth who walk for ever in the light of the celestial city."

At the close of the Book of Revelation St. John tells us that he saw, in vision, the new heavens and the new earth, the "World" or "Age" of Tomorrow, that "desire of all nations" which, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have been considering. In the last two chapters of his vision, there is unfolded, in wondrous symbol, the things he saw concerning that happy future Age. Many years ago the author last quoted took the thoughts expressed in these two chapters by St. John and wove them into a poem, which we submit below as a fitting conclusion to this meditation. May we

suggest that the reader open his Bible at the 21st chapter of the Book of Revelation, and mark how faithfully the inspiring verses of the poem interpret the words of Holy Writ:

### **"THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH"**

"And I beheld new heavens and earth,  
All radiant as the morning sun,  
Rejoicing on their day of birth;  
For the first heaven and earth were gone.  
And Eden spread o'er hill and lea  
Its peace; and there was no more sea.

"And I beheld afar in air,  
Descending out of heaven from God,  
As a chaste bride adorned and fair,  
A city mortal never trod,  
Shining with many a peerless gem  
The pure, the new Jerusalem.

"And a great voice from heaven I heard  
Which said, 'Behold, the dwelling place  
Of God, the house His hands have reared;  
That in His glory and His grace  
He may with men for ever dwell,  
As God with us, Immanuel. ,

"For His own hand from ever, eye  
Shall wipe away the tears of grief;  
And none shall languish, none shall die,  
And perish like the autumn leaf;  
And pain be at an end for aye,  
For former things are passed away.

"And He that sat upon the throne  
Spake thus: 'Lo, all things I renew!'  
And bid me write in joyful tone  
For faithful are the words and true;  
And said unto me: "It is done!  
The First, the Last, am I alone.'

"To him that is athirst I give  
The fountain infinite and free,  
The flowing spring whose waters live;  
And his forever shall it be.  
Who overcomes hath all things won;  
I am his God, and he My son.

"But unbelievers, the unclean,  
The, murderer, and man of lust,  
Unsuited for that holy scene  
The foul, the false, and the unjust  
Are sentenced to that lake of flame  
Which heaven 'the second death' doth name.

"And lo! an angel, of the seven  
Whose holy hands the vials bare  
Of the last judgment acts of heaven  
Drew near, and talking with me there,  
'Come hither,' said he, 'to my side,  
And I will show thee the Lamb's Bride.'

"And he upbore me to the brow  
Of a majestic mountain high,  
Whence, while the world lay far below,  
He turned my glances to the sky,  
And made me see a city fair  
Descending in the ambient air.

"She had the glory of her God.  
Her light was crystalline and clear  
As shining jasper; round her stood  
A wall with gates, and angels near  
Guarded those glistening gates full well,  
Named from the tribes of Israel.

"Three several gates on every side,  
On east, and north, and south, and west;  
Her wall had twelve foundations wide,  
With names inscribed for ever blest;  
On each foundation was the name  
Of an apostle of the Lamb.

"A golden reed the angel bare  
To measure the celestial frame;  
The city formed a mighty square,  
Its length and breadth and height the same;  
Twelve thousand furlongs every way  
The bright and beauteous city lay.

"And twelve times twelve he measured more,  
The stature of the jasper wall;  
The measure of the reed he bore  
Was human, yet angelical;  
The city was of worth untold,  
All crystal and transparent gold.

"How rich were its foundations fair!  
Chalcedony and chrysolite,  
And jasper, sapphire, sardius there,  
And topaz, each with different light,  
And amethyst, and many a gem  
Shone in the new Jerusalem.

"Its gates were twelve, of lustre white,  
A single pearl was every gate;  
Its street was golden crystal bright;  
No temple rose in sculptured state;  
For God Himself, the great I AM  
Is all the temple, and the Lamb.

"Its light was not the summer sun,  
The waning moon, the starry sky;  
The glory of Jehovah shone  
And streamed through its transparency;  
His presence made eternal day;  
The Lamb enlightened it for aye.

"The nations of the ransomed earth  
Shall walk in its transcendant light;  
And kings shall bring to it their worth,  
The tribute of their treasures bright;  
Its gates, for ever open wide,  
Shall welcome the rejoicing tide.

"No falling night or fleeting shade  
Shall o'er its beauty ever come;  
Nought that defiles or could degrade  
Shall enter that celestial home;  
But those who, like the Lamb's true Wife,  
Are written in the book of life.

"He showed me then a river clear  
Untroubled by a wave of strife,  
As crystal did its depths appear  
Whose waters of eternal life  
Were flowing ever from the throne  
Of God and of the Lamb alone.

"And by its bank on either side  
The wondrous tree of life did grow,  
All central in the city wide,  
And yielded fruit on every bough;  
And every month its branches bore  
Of fruit a different sort and store.

"And of the tree of life the leaves  
Were for the healing of mankind;  
And not a sin or curse which grieves  
The earth shall then remain behind;  
For there the throne of the I AM  
Shall ever be, and of the Lamb."

- *P. L. Read.*